TAGS: Sleeping Beauty, Beauty, Sleeping, Fairytale, Fairytales, Tales, Fairy, Charles Perrault, Perrault, Grimm, Folklore, Disney, Animation, Comics, Comic, Vintage, Princess, Disney Princess, Grimm's

"*Wondrous to see… Glorious to hear…*"

—Tagline

Sleeping Beauty is a 1959 animated feature produced by Walt Disney Productions and originally released to theaters on January 29, 1959, by Buena Vista Film Distribution. The 16th animated feature in the Disney Animated Canon, it was the last animated feature produced by Walt Disney to be based upon a fairy tale (after his death, the studio returned to the genre with *The Little Mermaid*), as well as the last cel animated feature from Disney to be inked by hand before the studio switched to using the xerography process. It's also the first animated feature to be shot in Super Technirama 70, one of many large-format widescreen processes (only one more animated film, *The Black Cauldron*, has been shot in Super Technirama 70). It spent nearly the whole decade of the 1950s in production: the story work began in 1951, the dialogue was recorded in 1953, animation production took from the same year the dialogue was recorded until 1958, and the musical score by George Bruns, drawn almost entirely from the ballet *Spyashchaya krasavitsa* by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, was recorded in the same year animation production finished.

Due to a lengthy problematic production and high costs, the film was originally a box office failure and did not make up the huge cost of the film. Along with the mixed critical reception, it was also noted to be the film that caused Walt Disney to lose interest in the animation medium. However, the subsequent re-releases proved massively successful, and critics and audiences have since praised it as an artistically animated classic. (Fandom)

PLOT

In 14th century Europe, King Stefan and Queen Leah give birth to their daughter Aurora. All their subjects are invited to the christening celebration, where the infant princess is betrothed to the young Prince Phillip, the son of Stefan's lifelong friend King Hubert, in order

to unite their kingdoms when they grow up. Among the guests are also Flora, Fauna, and Merryweather, the three good fairies who came to bless Aurora with magical gifts. Flora gives her the gift of beauty, and Fauna gives her the gift of song). Before Merryweather can give her gift, the celebration is interrupted by the arrival of the evil fairy Maleficent. Angered at not being invited, she curses Aurora to die when she pricks her finger on the spindle of a spinning wheel before the sun sets on the princess' sixteenth birthday. Stefan orders his guards to seize Maleficent, but she disappears just as they reach her.

Although she is not powerful enough to undo Maleficent's curse, Merryweather uses her gift to soften it, declaring that instead of dying, Aurora will fall into a deep sleep that will only end with true love's kiss. Still fearing for his daughter's life, Stefan orders all spinning wheels in the kingdom to be burned. Knowing that this is not enough to stop Maleficent, the fairies come up with a plan to hide Aurora in a secluded place, where they can keep her safe until her sixteenth birthday. Stefan and Leah reluctantly agree and during that night, the fairies secretly leave the castle with the infant princess to the woodcutter's cottage deep in the forest. The fairies give up using magic and raise Aurora as a peasant girl, whom they rename Briar Rose to conceal her true identity. Upon discovering that Aurora has disappeared, Maleficent sends her goons to find her, but they spend almost sixteen years looking for a baby, much to Maleficent's frustration. As a last resort, she sends her pet raven Diablo to look for the princess.

As the years pass, Aurora grows into a beautiful young woman with a lovely singing voice. On her sixteenth birthday, the fairies (whom she believes are her aunts) plan to prepare a surprise party and send Aurora to pick berries, warning her not to talk to strangers. In the forest, Aurora meets her animal friends and entertains them with her singing, while wondering why she was sheltered from the world and why her "aunts" are overprotective towards her. Aurora's singing gains the attention of Phillip, who has grown into a handsome young man and is out riding in the woods with his horse Samson. Although she is initially startled, Aurora (who has been dreaming of meeting a handsome prince) becomes attached to Phillip, and they fall in love with each other. Realizing that she has to return home, Aurora

flees from Phillip before learning his name (nor does he learn hers), but asks him to come to the cottage that evening.

Back at the cottage, the fairies use magic to conjure gifts for Aurora. While Fauna is preparing the cake, Flora and Merryweather argue about the color of Aurora's dress and begin a duel with magic wands, attracting Diablo's attention. When Aurora returns, she tells her "aunts" that she has fallen in love, and the fairies have to reveal her true identity as a princess and that she is betrothed to Prince Phillip. They also sadly inform Aurora that she will return to her parents' castle this evening and will not be able to see her beloved again. Heartbroken, Aurora runs to her room in tears, while Diablo (overhearing their conversation) flies away to inform Maleficent. Meanwhile, as everyone in the castle await for Aurora's return, Stefan and Hubert argue about their children's future that nearly resulted in a brief brawl. At one point, Phillip arrives to tell Hubert about a peasant girl he met and wishes to marry despite his prearranged marriage to Aurora. Hubert is upset at this and fails to dissuade Phillip, who rides off to meet his beloved in the forest cottage.

Shortly before the sunset, the fairies return Aurora to the castle and briefly leave her alone in her chambers. Maleficent appears and hypnotizes Aurora, luring her to a tower room, where Maleficent conjures the spinning wheel. Realizing their mistake, the fairies try to go after and save Aurora, but they are too late as Aurora pricks her finger on a spindle at Maleficent's order. Having fulfilled her curse, Maleficent taunts the fairies and disappears. Unwilling to break her parents' hearts about their failure, the fairies place the sleeping Aurora in a bedroom in the highest tower and put everyone in the kingdom to sleep until their princess awakens. As she casts the spell, Flora overhears a drowsy conversation between Hubert and Stefan, learning that Phillip is the man Aurora fell in love with. The fairies rush to the cottage, where they discover that Phillip has been captured by Maleficent and her goons.

The fairies infiltrate Maleficent's domain, the Forbidden Mountain, where they discover Maleficent tauntingly revealing Aurora's identity to Phillip in the dungeon, as well as her plans to keep Phillip imprisoned until he is an old man on the verge of death before releasing him to find Aurora, who will not age a day. Once Maleficent leaves, the fairies free Phillip and

help him escape the Forbidden Mountain, arming the prince with the Sword of Truth and the Shield of Virtue. Warned by Diablo (right before he is petrified by Merryweather), Maleficent attempts to thwart Phillip by surrounding Stefan's castle with a forest of thorns, but Phillip hacks his way through it. Enraged again, Maleficent then confronts him personally by blocking his path at Stefan’s castle, Transforming herself into a gigantic fire-breathing dragon, Maleficent fights with Phillip until she corners him at a cliff. With the help of the fairies, he throws the sword into Maleficent's heart, which instantly kills her and sending her crashing down into the abyss.

Afterwards, the fairies lead Phillip to the highest tower, where he finds and awakens Aurora with a kiss, saving her and the rest of the kingdom. Just as Stefan and Hubert were about to resume their conversation, Aurora and Phillip descends to the ballroom, where Aurora reunites with her parents and then happily waltzes with Phillip. The fairies joyfully look on, though Flora and Merryweather resume their argument about the color of Aurora's dress.